

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for restricting access to information communicated between parties, comprising:
first encoding of the information for obtaining a corresponding first encoded version of the information;
second encoding said first encoded version for obtaining a corresponding second encoded version of the information;
wherein one of said first and second steps of encoding results in said corresponding version being substantially restricted from a first party decoding the information encoded therein without having access to a first decoding data;
wherein another of said first and second steps of encoding results in said corresponding version being substantially restricted from a second party decoding the information therein without having access to a second decoding data;
first providing, to the second party, said second encoded version;
subsequently, performing a predetermined activity between the first and second parties using an instance of the information, wherein the second party does not have access to said second decoding data but has access to at least portions of the information;
subsequently, second providing to the second party said second decoding data;
wherein the second party decodes the second encoded version using the second decoding data, and then decodes the first encoded version using the first decoding data.
2. (Original) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the first party is a provider of said predetermined activity, and the second party is a participant in said predetermined activity.
3. (Original) The method, as claimed in Claim 2, wherein at least one of the steps of first providing, second providing and performing includes communicating between the first and second parties via a communications network.
4. (Original) The method, as claimed in Claim 3, wherein said communications network includes one or more of: a local area network, a wide area network, the World Wide Web, and the Internet.
5. (Original) The method, as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said predetermined activity includes a game, wherein the information includes an ordered collection of game token values to be presented to the second party in accordance with one or more game rules.
6. (Original) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said predetermined activity allows participants to enter the activity and obtain an entry identification, and

wherein said predetermined activity associates one or more entry identifications with an outcome from said predetermined activity.

7. (Original) The method as claimed in Claim 6, wherein said predetermined activity is one of: a contest, a lottery, a drawing, and a sweepstakes.

Please cancel Claim 8.

9. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein at least one of said steps of first and second encoding includes encrypting the information using a key from a public/private encryption key pair.

10. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim ~~[[1]]~~ 9, wherein at least one of said steps of first and second encoding includes encrypting the information using a secret key.

11. (Original) The method as claimed in Claim 1, further including a step of transmitting said first decoding data from the second party to the first party via a communications network.

12. (Original) The method, as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said second decoding data is a decryption key.

13. (Original) The method, as claimed in Claim 1, further including a step of comparing said instance of the information with said decoded version.

14. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein one of said steps of first and second encoding uses one of an RSA encryption technique, a DES encryption technique, and a hashing technique.

15. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including a step of obtaining a decoder for performing one of said first and second decoding step from a trusted third party.

16. (Original) The method of Claim 15, wherein said step of obtaining includes downloading said decoder from an Internet website.

17. (Currently Amended) A method for restricting access to information communicated between parties, comprising:

first encoding of the information for obtaining a corresponding first encoded version of the information;